

Remarks:

The following remarks are responsive to the Office action dated December 14, 2005. Claims 1-30 are pending in the application. In the Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-30 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Applicant traverses the rejections, contending that the rejected claims are not obvious.

Nevertheless, to expedite the issuance of a patent, and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim aspects of the invention that applicant would like to patent now, applicant has (1) canceled claims 2, 13, 23, and 30, without prejudice, and (2) amended claims 1, 3, 12, 22, and 24. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the canceled claims at a later time. Furthermore, applicant has presented remarks showing that claims 1, 3-12, 14-22, and 24-29 are not obvious over the cited references. Accordingly, in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111 and allowance of the pending claims.

I. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected all of the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious. In particular, claims 1-10, 12-20, and 22-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,680,455 to Linsker et al. ("Linsker") in view of a published U.S. patent application, namely, U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0080959 to Weller ("Weller"). In addition, claims 11, 21, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Linsker in view of Weller and

further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,185,684 to Pravetz et al. Applicant traverses the rejections.

Nevertheless, applicant has amended the claims to expedite the issuance of a patent, and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim aspects of the invention that applicant would like to patent now. In particular, applicant has canceled independent claim 30, without prejudice, and has amended independent claims 1, 12, and 22 to include, respectively, the recited elements of claims 2, 13, and 23. Claims 2, 13, and 23 have been canceled without prejudice. In addition, claims 3 and 24 have been amended to address formal issues created by the amendments to claims 1 and 22. Neither Linsker nor Weller, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all of the elements of any of claims 1, 3-12, 14-22, and 24-29 for the reasons set forth below.

Claims 1 and 3-11

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for regulating the ability of a sender to print on a printer, comprising the steps of:

receiving, at a printer, a print job from a sender, where the print job includes a representation of a document and an aspect of the print job that is encrypted with a private key of the sender;

verifying the sender by decoding the aspect using a public key of the sender, where the public key and the private key form a key pair; and

printing the document on the printer only if the aspect of the print job is decoded successfully,

where the printer is located at a printing site and printing is contingent on re-verification of the sender at the printing site.

Linsker and Weller do not teach or suggest every element of amended claim 1. For example, Linsker and Weller do not teach or suggest “re-verification of the sender at the printing site.”

Both Linsker and Weller involve verification of documents that are sent or transmitted, to verify that the documents are not forged or altered. However, neither reference teaches or suggests a re-verification of the sender at the printing site, for example, to ensure that the sender is present at the printing site before the document is printed (e.g., see page 10, lines 8-10, of the application). Accordingly, neither reference teaches or suggests the additional aspects recited by claims 3 and 4: “demonstrating possession of the private key by the sender at the printing site” (claim 3) or possession “demonstrated with a locally-restricted optical signal” (claim 4).

In the Office action, the Examiner rejected claim 2 (now amended claim 1) by stating that “the sender is verified upon a demonstration that the sender possesses the private key at the printing site (see col. 5, lines 41-50 of Linsker).” The cited passage of Linsker relates to sender verification performed only once. However, claim 1 recites “re-verification of the sender at the printing site,” in addition to “verifying the sender.” Neither Linsker nor Weller teaches or suggest printing that is contingent on “re-verification of the sender.”

Linsker and Weller, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest every element of claim 1. Claim 1 thus should be allowed. Claims 3-11, which depend from claim 1, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 12 and 14-21

Independent claim 12 is directed to a system:

12. (Currently Amended) A system for regulating the ability of a sender to print on a printer, comprising:

a sending processor that includes a private key of a sender, where the private key forms a key pair with a public key, the sending processor being adapted to encrypt an aspect of a print job using the private key and to send the print job and encrypted aspect over a network; and

a printer in communication with the sending processor, where the printer is adapted to receive the print job and encrypted aspect from the sending processor, to verify the sender by decoding the encrypted aspect using the public key, and to print a document based on the print job only if the aspect of the print job is decoded successfully,

where the printer is located at a printing site and the sender is re-verified upon a demonstration that the sender possesses the private key at the printing site.

Linsker and Weller, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest every element of claim 12. For example, according to the analysis presented above in relation to claim 1, Linsker and Weller do not teach or suggest “where the printer is located at a printing site and the sender is re-verified upon a demonstration that the sender possesses the private key at the printing site.” Claim 12 thus should be allowed. Claims 14-21, which depend from claim 12, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 12.

Claims 22 and 24-29

Claim 22 is directed to a printer:

22. (Currently Amended) A printer capable of regulating output of a print job from a sender, comprising:

a printer in communication with a sender and adapted to receive a print job that has an aspect encrypted with a private key of the sender, to verify the sender by decoding the aspect using a public key of the sender that forms a key pair with the private key, to determine if the sender with the private key has permission to print, and to output the print job only if the aspect of the print job is decoded successfully,

where the printer is located at a printing site and is further adapted to re-verify the sender by receiving a demonstration that the sender possesses the private key at the printing site.

Linsker and Weller do not teach or suggest every element of claim 22. For example, according to the analysis presented above in relation to claim 1, Linsker and Weller do not teach or suggest "where the printer is located at a printing site and is further adapted to re-verify the sender by receiving a demonstration that the sender possesses the private key at the printing site." Claim 22 thus should be allowed. Claims 24-29, which depend from claim 22, also should be allowed for at least the same reasons as claim 22.

II. Conclusion

Applicant believes that this application is in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on April 14, 2006.



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